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Pars: McCarthy, Eugene (Sen)

Foreign Students Rap News Treatment in U.S.

WILLIAMSBURG, Va., June 8 (AP)—The performance of the American press in reporting global news was put under close scrutiny by foreign graduate students attending the eighth annual Williamsburg International Assembly here today.

In the initial plenary discussions of the four-day seminar, 54 delegates from 43 nations heard remarks by Alfred Friendly, managing editor of The Washington Post, and Sen. Eugene McCarthy, (D-Minn.).

Friendly's topic, "The Role and the Responsibility of the Press," attracted considerable interest from the delegates, many of whom expressed a general concern over the interpretations by the U.S. press of foreign news.

In his opening remarks, Friendly said the twofold mission of the American press was to inform the public and to serve as a critical watchdog.

"The American press is an arm of the society or nation, but in no way a creature of the Government," he said. "It is performing this function rather badly in some areas and rather well in others."

While conceding that a meagerness of intellectual fare is being provided newspaper readers, Friendly was quick to praise the news

gathering efforts of the Fourth Estate.

"I think the American press does a spectacularly good job of reporting American politics at the local level," he said.

The students, however, were concerned with the image of their own countries as sometimes shaped by the American press. This concern was reflected clearly in a question-and-answer period in assertions that the press in this country tends to sensationalize adverse conditions in news from abroad.

Friendly answered that "news, by definition, is something out of the ordinary," and that, for example, a drought or flood experienced in an underdeveloped nation is correctly given more attention than perhaps the smooth ebb and flow of a nation's political scene. He concluded with the thought that foreign news is becoming local news as the globe shrinks.

Sen. McCarthy's remarks were on "The National Political Focus."

McCarthy said there is a pressing need for some means whereby Congress can exercise a measure of control over various commissions and committees appointed by the executive branch.

He cited the present House and Senate Joint Committee on Atomic Energy as "a step in the right direction."